

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 ACDA-07 OMB-01 IO-13 DHA-02 /090 W

-----121010Z 015390 /12

R 120850Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4677

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA JAPAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TOKYO 0487

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, KS, JA, US

SUBJECT: HOW TO MANAGE US TROOP WITHDRAWALS FROM KOREA: SOME
JAPANESE VIEWS

SUMMARY: OFFICIAL JAPANESE PUBLIC REACTION TO THE
IDEA OF US TROOP WITHDRAWALS FROM KOREA HAS BEEN
GENERALLY NEGATIVE, RANGING FROM ADAMANT OPPOSITION TO,
MORE RECENTLY, RECOGNITION THAT JAPAN MUST PREPARE FOR
THE INEVITABLE. PRIVATELY, MEMBERS OF FOREIGN POLICY
ESTABLISHMENT IN TOKYO HAVE BEEN MORE FLEXIBLE AND
POSITIVE, CONCENTRATING ON HOW WITHDRAWAL MIGHT BE
ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT UPSETTING POWER BALANCE ON
PENINSULA, AND WITHOUT AROUSING DOMESTIC POLITICAL
PASSIONS. CONSENSUS OF INFORMAL VIEWS IS THAT US
TROOP WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE (A) BASED ON STRATEGIC
CONSIDERATIONS RATHER THAN AMERICAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL
PRESSURES AND EXPLAINED AS SUCH; (B) SUPPORTED BY
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COMPENSATING MEASURES THAT WOULD MAINTAIN MILITARY/POLITICAL
BALANCE OF POWER ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA; (C) ACCOMPANIED
BY DIPLOMATIC MOVES TO EASE TENSIONS IN THE AREA;
(D) GRADUALLY AND SELECTIVELY IMPLEMENTED; AND
(E) DISCUSSED WITH THE GOJ IN A MANNER THAT WOULD LIMIT
JAPANESE DOMESTIC POLITICAL DAMAGE. COMPLEXITIES
ARE SUCH THAT FIRST STEP IN MANAGING PROBLEM MIGHT BE

"CONSULTATIONS ON CONSULTATIONS" -- A PRELIMINARY
ROUND DESIGNED TO DETERMINE FORM AND FORMAT MOST
ADVANTAGEOUS TO BOTH. END SUMMARY.

INTERNAL PUBLIC ALARMS

1. OFFICIAL JAPANESE PUBLIC CONCERN OVER
IMPLICATIONS FOR JAPANESE SECURITY AND STABILITY IN
EAST ASIA OF AN AMERICAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM KOREA
SURFACED JUST AFTER US ELECTION. NOVEMBER 10 SPEECH
IN MINNEAPOLIS BY WASHINGTON AMBASSADOR TOGO URGING NO
CHANGE IN US TROOP PRESENCE IN THE ROK RECEIVED
UNPRECEDENTED PRESS ATTENTION IN JAPAN, OVERSHADOWING
EVEN THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF EMPEROR HIROHITO'S
REGIN. DURING THE NEXT SIX WEEKS LEADING OFFICIALS
CONCERNED, INCLUDING FOREIGN MINISTER KOSAKA,
JAPAN DEFENSE AGENCY (JDA) VICE MINISTER MARUYAMA,
SECRETARY OF THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COUNCIL KUBO, AND
JAPANESE AMBASSADOR TO SEOUL NISHIYAMA ALL ISSUED
PUBLIC STATEMENTS ECHOING TOGO VIEW. MOST NEGATIVE
AND ADAMANT OF THESE CAME FROM MARUYAMA, WHO TOLD PRESS
IN EARLY DECEMBER THAT US WITHDRAWAL "WOULD
INVALIDATE THE BASIC PREMISES FOR THE FORMULATION
OF OUR STANDARD DEFENSE-FORCE CONCEPT. THE PRESENCE
OF US MILITARY FORCES, ESPECIALLY GROUND FORCES,"
MARUYAMA WENT ON TO SAY, "IS AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION
FOR MAINTAINING STABILITY IN THAT PENINSULA, WHICH IN
TURN MAKES IT AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION FOR JAPAN'S
OWN STABILITY. "IN MY VIEW," MARUYAMA CONCLUDED,
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"SIMPLY TALKING ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH A
WITHDRAWAL CAN HAVE A PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT DETRIMENTAL
TO THE STABILITY OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA AND JAPAN'S
NATIONAL SECURITY." PRESS ANALYSIS ACCOMPANYING THESE
REMARKS WAS SIMILARLY ALARMIST, WITH TONE SET BY AN
ASAHI SHIMBUN EDITORIAL DESCRIBING JAPAN'S DIPLOMACY
AS "VIOLENTLY SHAKEN BY TALK OF WITHDRAWAL OF US TROOPS
FROM KOREA."

THE MOOD CHANGES

2. PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE OF
DECEMBER 21 MARKED SHIFT IN THE OFFICIAL JAPANESE
PUBLIC STANCE ON THE ISSUE, AWAY FROM THE INFLEXIBLE
OPPOSITION EXPRESSED EARLIER. HIS REITERATION OF
CAMPAIGN PLEDGE TO REMOVE TROOPS FROM KOREA APPARENTLY
CONVINCED JAPANESE THAT SOME SORT OF DECISION WAS
UNAVOIDABLE. AT SAME TIME PRESIDENT-ELECT'S EMPHASIS
ON GRADUAL IMPLEMENTATION AND CLOSE CONSULTATIONS WITH

JAPAN AND ROK WAS COMFORTING. REACTING TO THE STATEMENT, FOREIGN OFFICE STRESSED THAT JAPAN HAD NO MEANS OF RESISTING A US WITHDRAWAL AND HOPED THAT ACTION WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY DIPLOMATIC MOVES TO EASE TENSION. BY END OF YEAR PRESS WAS REPORTING JUDGMENT WITHIN JDA THAT US GROUND TROOPS IN THE ROK WOULD PROBABLY BEGIN A GRADUAL PULLOUT WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR THAT WOULD BE COMPLETED BY THE EARLY 1980S AT LATEST. TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS WOULD BE WITHDRAWN WITHIN THE NEXT YEAR OR TWO.

SIGNS OF FLEXIBILITY

3. PRIVATE AND INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH MEMBERS OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS ESTABLISHMENT IN TOKYO HAVE REVEALED A FAR MORE COMPLEX AND FLEXIBLE VIEW ON THE WITHDRAWAL ISSUE. THEY CONINUE, OF COURSE, TO SEE
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MAINTENANCE OF STATUS QUO ON KOREAN PENINSULA AS VITAL TO JAPANESE SECURITY AND REMAIN ANXIOUS ABOUT ANY CHANGES THAT MIGHT THREATEN BALANCE OF POWER THERE.

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THEY UNDERSTAND THAT IMPORTANCE OF US GROUND FORCES IN ROK PRIMARILY POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL. ACCORDINGLY, RATHER THAN DISMISS IDEA OF TROOP WITHDRAWALS AS UNTHINKABLE OR BEMOAN ITS INEVITABILITY, THEY HAVE FOCUSED ON BEST MEANS OF EFFECTING WITHDRAWALS WITHOUT UPSETTING BALANCE ON PENINSULA, AND WITHOUT AROUSING INTENSE LOCAL PASSIONS THAT HAVE LONG COMPLICATED DOMESTIC POLITICAL HANDLING OF KOREAN ISSUES.

4. CONSENSUS SO FAR IS THAT WITHDRAWALS MOST MANAGEABLE FOR JAPAN UNDER FOLLOWING CONDITIONS:

A. ACTION SHOULD BE GENUINELY BASED ON STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS AND CAREFULLY EXPLAINED AS SUCH. ONE OF THE MAIN FEARS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ESTABLISHMENT IS THAT US DECISION TO WITHDRAW FROM KOREA WILL BE BASED, OR BE INTERPRETED AS HAVING CONFIDENTIAL

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BEEN BASED, ON DOMESTIC PRESSURES CREATED BY ROK-CAPITOL HILL SCANDAL, HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE AND PUBLIC DISTASTE FOR PARK DICTATORSHIP RATHER THAN ON CLEARLY EXPLAINED AND DEFENSIBLE TACTICAL/STRATEGIC GROUNDS. GOJ WOULD HAVE NO DIFFICULTY ACCEPTING US DECISION FOR PHASED TROOP WITHDRAWAL IF MADE AFTER CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS FOR EAST ASIAN POWER BALANCE, AND CAREFULLY EXPLAINED AS SUCH, BOTH IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE.

JAPANESE OBSERVERS HAVE NOT SAID BUT HAVE IMPLIED, THAT EVIDENCE OF AMERICAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURES OVERRIDING ASIAN STRATEGIC CONCERNS WOULD CALL INTO QUESTION AMERICAN SOUNDNESS AND RELIABILITY AS AN ALLY. THIS CONCERN, AS WELL AS GENERAL JAPANESE DEFENSIVENESS ON THE ENTIRE TOPIC OF AMERICAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM KOREA, IS FED BY UNDERLYING FEAR THAT US-ROK RELATIONS DETERIORATING, AND FURTHER THREATENED TO UNKNOWN EXTENT BY REVELATIONS THAT MIGHT BE MADE IN "KOREAGATE" SCANDAL. BEYOND THAT IS WORRY THAT JAPAN MAY SOMEHOW BE CAUGHT IN BETWEEN US AND ROK AND FORCED TO PLAY UNWANTED POLITICAL OR SECURITY ROLE.

B. WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE GRADUAL AND IMPLY NO LESSENING OF US COMMITMENT. IMPLEMENTATION OF ANY DECISION TO WITHDRAW GROUND FORCES SHOULD BE

CAREFULLY PHASED OVER FOUR-TO-FIVE YEARS, TO LESSEN IMPACT ON STRATEGIC BALANCE AND AVOID IMPRESSION THAT US PRECIPITATELY ABANDONING COMMITMENT TO MAINTAIN STABILITY IN REGION. JAPANESE WILL EXAMINE CONGRESSIONAL ROLE IN US DECISION TO REDUCE US TROOP PRESENCE IN ROK, AND WILL BE ANXIOUS TO SEE EVIDENCE OF CONGRESSIONAL BACKING FOR GRADUAL APPROACH TO WITHDRAWAL WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF CONTINUED FIRM US COMMITMENT TO SECURITY OF ROK.

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C. WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE SELECTIVE AND BALANCED BY COMPENSATORY MEASURES. JAPANESE COMMENTATORS AND DEFENSE EXPERTS ASSUME THAT FORCE REDUCTION WILL BE LIMITED TO GROUND TROOPS AND PERHAPS TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS, LEAVING TACTICAL AIR CAPABILITY, COMMAND AND LOGISTICAL STRUCTURE, AND US NAVAL POWER IN AREA UNDIMINISHED. THEY BELIEVE THAT ANY AMERICAN GROUND FORCE REDUCTION SHOULD BE COUNTERBALANCED BY INCREASED US SUPPORT FOR MODERNIZING ROK CAPABILITIES, PARTICULARLY RELATING TO TACTICAL MISSILES AND TANKS.

D. WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY LOWERING OF TENSION ON KOREAN PENINSULA. JAPANESE TAKE AS GIVEN THAT REDUCTION OF AMERICAN FORCES IN ROK WILL NOT PROCEED IF TENSIONS RISE ON PENINSULA. THEY WOULD PREFER TO SEE REDUCTION ACCOMPANIED BY DIPLOMATIC MOVES INVOLVING SOVIET AND CHINESE PARTICIPATION THAT WOULD UNDERWRITE STABILITY IN NORTHEAST ASIA.

E. WITHDRAWAL SHOULD BE DISCUSSED WITH JAPAN BUT IN A WAY THAT WILL LIMIT DOMESTIC POLITICAL DAMAGE. GOJ OFFICIALS WANT A CHANCE TO EXCHANGE VIEWS FULLY BEFORE US MAKES UP ITS MIND. THEY WANT TO BE INFORMED WELL IN ADVANCE WHAT US PLANS TO DO ONCE FINAL DECISION TAKEN, BUT DO NOT REPT NOT WANT TO BE CONSULTED IN WAY THAT SUGGESTS JAPAN PARTY TO DECISION. ALTHOUGH KNOWLEDGE OF CONSULTATION WOULD HAVE TO BE PUBLIC, JAPANESE DO NOT WANT DETAILED SUBSTANCE OF ANY EXCHANGE TO BE OPEN. JAPANESE OFFICIALS POINT OUT THAT CONSULTATION WHICH CAST THEM IN CODETERMINANT ROLE ON ANY AMERICAN DECISION TO WITHDRAW GROUND FORCES FROM THE ROK WOULD FACE THEM WITH TWO SERIOUS PROBLEMS. FIRST, THEY WOULD BE REQUIRED TO DEVELOP CLEAR POLICIES ON TEHCNICAL MILITARY QUESTIONS THEY HAVE AVOIDED BEFORE. SECOND, AND MORE WORRISOME, THEY WOULD BE

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CONFRONTED WITH THE PROBLEM OF DEFENDING SUCH
POLICIES IN THE DIET, WHERE THEY WOULD CONFRONT
HOSTILE REACTION FROM BOTH RIGHT AND LEFT.

5. IN SUM, JAPANESE LOOKING FOR CONSULTATIVE
PROCESS WHICH PROVIDES (A) OPPORTUNITY AND TIME TO
ASSIMILATE US THINKING LEADING TO DECISION (B) ABILITY
TO SHOW THAT USG HAS SOLICITED GOJ VIEWS AND TAKEN
INTO ACCOUNT JAPANESE INTERESTS AND (C) ADVANCE
INFORMATION OF USG DECISIONS. FACED WITH THESE
NEEDS AND DANGERS, JAPANESE WHO EXPRESS VIEWS ON
THE SUBJECT SUGGEST THAT THE FIRST STEP IN MANAGING
WITH JAPAN A REDUCTION OF US FORCES IN KOREA MIGHT BE
"CONSULTATIONS ON CONSULTATIONS" -- A PRELIMINARY
ROUND DESIGNED TO DETERMINE THE FORM AND FORMAT OF
DISCUSSIONS MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO BOTH SIDES.
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Message Attributes

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